

June 1997

From Cancellations to Collaborations

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Recommended Citation

Zappen, Susan (1997) "From Cancellations to Collaborations," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 9: Iss. 3, Article 7.

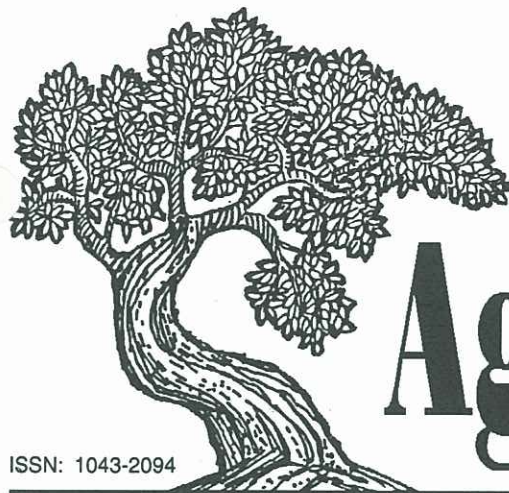
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2132>

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ALA ANNUAL ISSUE

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 3

JUNE 1997



ISSN: 1043-2094

Against the Grain

"Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians"

From Cancellations to Collaboration — Some Thoughts

by **Susan H. Zappen** (Head of Technical Services,
Lucy Scribner Library, Skidmore College)



Background

Been there, done that. That was my initial reaction a several months ago when Acquisitions staff informed me that some of our

microfilm titles were going to double in price and several other titles were more than doubling in price for 1997. We did not anticipate these increases, especially those in microfilm. And judging from our major renewal invoice, we were seeing at least a 12% price increase in our subscriptions for 1997. Again, we were compelled to review our subscriptions to find titles to cancel. Been there, done that.

It's not that I don't care about the price increases. It's just that I realize that scholarly

communication is changing. Price increases function as an accelerator for change. Eventually we will arrive at the real issue: who owns and controls the information. In the meantime, the college library whether large or small is maintaining its mission to meet the educational and research needs of students and faculty. We are only changing our methods to achieve our mission. And I'm very excited about what we at Skidmore College are doing: we are providing access to

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If Rumors Were Horses

Well, we have plenty of exciting news this month.

First, there's the appointment of **Clifford Lynch**, the magnificent, as the new Executive Director of CNI, The Coalition for Networked Information, replacing Paul Evan Peters after his tragic death. Congratulations to Clifford and CNI!

Second, we have just learned about the sale of **Carfax Publishing**



Company (ATG interviewed president **John Cox** in v.7#4, September of 1994, pp. 31-36). Carfax Publishing Ltd is now part of **Routledge Publishing Holdings Ltd**, an independent group consisting of Routledge Ltd. in London and Routledge, Inc. of New York, who together publish over 800 book titles in the humanities and social sciences (Routledge Ltd. also has a journal program of 35 titles). Carfax remains intact as a stand-alone business based in Abingdon. The Carfax publishing team is unchanged. **John Cox** remains as Managing Director of the Company; in addition, he has joined the Board of Routledge Publishing Holdings Ltd. **David Green** remains as Publishing Director. "Our brief at Carfax is to continue to develop our journal program," says John Cox. "Joining the Routledge family will enable us to do that from within a group that is going for growth, with the resources to make that possible."

ATG was recently interviewing **Colin Jones**, President of Routledge US, who used to be director of **New York University Press**. Stay tuned for our interview coming soon in ATG. In the meantime, there is a great publisher's profile of Routledge which **Matt Nauman** did in this issue, page 58.

Moving right along, the man who started and has built Carfax over the past 25 years, **Duncan Spence**, writes that he will have no further involvement with the company. He is now located at **Publishers Services Limited** (P.O. Box 31, Sark GY9 0SB, Channel Islands).

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information by cooperating and collaborating with other libraries.

Journal Price Increases

You don't have to be a large research library to be troubled by the price increases. Skidmore's Lucy Scribner Library is a small undergraduate library. Most of our journal titles are in the humanities. But the 12% that are scientific use 50% of the journals money. We still spend more money on books than on journals. And that's refreshing! The effects of the rising cost of STM journal titles over the last several years have been more severe on both the large research libraries and on the libraries specializing in scientific/technical or medical collections. In those libraries the percentage of STM titles, the percentage of total dollars spent on them, and the total materials budget itself would be higher than at Skidmore. But we have felt the increases. We, as well as the large research libraries, have had to cancel journals. We canceled titles for calendar year 1995 and received a 19% increase in the journals budget. The cancellations and the budget increase allowed us to order some new titles for calendar year 1996. With the information we have about our 1997 costs, we anticipate canceling for 1998. For the first time, we will be looking at titles in print which we have available by electronic subscription or in fulltext on such products as **Expanded Academic Index**. Even with budget increases that are above the inflation rate we are unable to keep up with rising journal costs.

Money isn't the answer. While I was on staff at **Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute**, the library received about a 20 to 25% increase in the journals budget. This relieved the situation for one year. The 19% increase at Skidmore bought the same amount of time. College administrators view library journals as a black hole. It doesn't matter how much money you throw at journals. The money just disappears. It's never enough. I have to agree with them and that's kind of scary for a child of the sixties. Private colleges obtain their income from endowment interest and tuition. To remain viable we must keep our tuition and tuition increases reasonable. At Skidmore we are focusing on the challenge of how we can change in order to meet the informational needs of students and faculty with resources that increase at the normal rate of inflation and not at the rate of journals inflation.

Cooperation and Collaboration

You don't have to be a large research library to meet the challenge. At Skidmore we focus on cooperation and collaboration with other libraries. ILL service is a

long standing form of cooperation. We are fortunate to have several college libraries within New York's capital district. Our daily courier service still fulfills 68% of our ILL requests. The turnaround time is usually four days and at no cost to the requester. Expanding beyond the capital district is our SUNY/OCCL network. We have reciprocal agreements with about 161 libraries. The turnaround time is usually 10 to 15 days and again at no cost to the requester.

As one of the 74 members of the **Oberlin Group**, a select group of small liberal arts colleges throughout the country, we have reciprocal agreements with the member libraries. Those libraries fill another 6% of our requests. They are a group whose members make the extra effort including same day fax to help us when we are in a bind. Over time we have also made reciprocal agreements with several other libraries.

Among our fiscal year 1995-1996 ILL requests, only 2% of our student requests and 8% of faculty requests incurred charges and not all of the charges were passed on to the requesters. Document delivery is not used often, although we have provided a class with document delivery for requests from a specific journal. I expect this service to grow as libraries cancel more journals and as long as it remains affordable.

ILL Requests and Consortial Initiatives

Each year we look at our ILL journal article requests. We were unable to identify a single journal that warranted purchase among the fiscal year 1995-1996 requests. I think it is interesting that half of our faculty ILL requests were for books. Since I share overall collection development responsibility with the Head of Public Services, I plan to look at the books requested to determine if there are weak areas in our collection.

Skidmore's collaboration with other libraries in sharing the cost of access will continue to expand. It began with two endeavors. **Coleslaw** is the name of a small group of Oberlin members: **Colgate, Hamilton, Skidmore, St. Lawrence, Union, Vassar, and Williams**. **Coleslaw** members first met in 1995 to talk about the shared acquisition of databases, document delivery, and staff development. Skidmore and Williams College jointly purchased the electronic *Encyclopedia Britannica*. We provide access to our users from our homepage. Within the last couple of months, Skidmore, Colgate, Union, and Vassar jointly purchased *PsycInfo*. Colgate, Union, and Vassar access *PsycInfo* from Skidmore's server. Alone, Skidmore would have been allowed 2-4 simultaneous users. With the consortial arrangement, simultaneous access is virtually unlimited, the coverage goes back

farther, and the cost is lower. Another outcome of this consortial activity is that ILL staff from some of the libraries have met to discuss issues of common concern and enhance their working relationships.

RPI mounted *Current Contents* tapes on its OPAC about five years ago and then sought other libraries which would like to be part of a consortium sharing the cost and the access. I was on staff at RPI when the library issued invitations to area libraries, including Skidmore, and other libraries in the region. Skidmore on its own cannot afford *Current Contents*. As a member of **Pie Square**, RPI's name for the consortium, we can afford to provide our students and faculty with telnet access to *Current Contents* from our homepage.

As a member of the **Oberlin Group**, Skidmore became a charter subscriber to **Project Muse**, a project which will digitize and make available by electronic subscription all of **Johns Hopkins University Press** journals by the end of 1997. Both the pricing and the electronic features have made us pleased to be part of such an undertaking. We hope to find other publishers with similar projects.

Consortial Problems

Some practical advice to those libraries which want to form a consortium. You may find that getting the right people together is the biggest hurdle. Library directors have to be involved because of agreements and contracts. Library directors are always overwhelmed with demands on their time so the process can move slowly. You will want your systems person or computer center liaison to be there. Easier said than done. You will at some point have to involve your campus purchasing officer. More delay. Once you get everyone together don't expect to identify a product that everyone wants. Only Skidmore and Williams wanted the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Most, but not all, of the Oberlin Group libraries are **Project Muse** subscribers. I've been at meetings where a director mentions a product and asks for a show of hands from interested libraries. Then those libraries choose one of the directors to pursue the collaborative purchase with the publisher or vendor. The members or number of members in your consortium will continue to change. Already we have another library interested in *PsycInfo*. The first two libraries that joined **Pie Square** dropped out, but several other libraries have since joined.

Some Advice to Publishers

When General Motors can't move cars off the lot, when Kay Bee Toys has silly putty clogging aisle two, and when Sears has a warehouse full of chain saws, what do they do? They lower prices. Journal publishers are the only producers in

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Not Exactly Rick Dees by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

The worlds "hottest" papers rankings have come out of the **Institute for Scientific Information (ISI)**. The hottest research: **Roger J. Davis** at the **U. Of Mass. Worcester** with 11 papers on the hot topic of signal transduction. Other hot topics included theoretical physics, neuroscience, genomics, and

molecular biology. Mad cows were responsible for the number-one "red hot" research paper in 1996: "A new variant of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in the U.K." by **R.G. Will** and colleagues published in *The Lancet*. See — "Burning Up the Citation Logs," *Science*, v.275 (March 14, 1997) p.1573.

And the Winner Is ... by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

Galileo <www.galileo.web-zone.it>, an electronic magazine started by a group of scientists and journalists, has won the **Pirelli INTERNETional Prize**. The Italian tire giant wanted to call attention to the enlightened side of the Internet, rather than popular portrayals of the Web as a source of pornography or a guide to making explosives.


Other winners include an Italian science high school's hypertext project on lichens, and a multimedia arts and crafts encyclopedia on CD-ROM. Next year's prize is open to all European Internet users, and by the year 2000, all Internet users will be eligible. See — "Internet Science Prize," *Science*, v.275 (February 28, 1997) p.1271.

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doctrines, practices, liturgy, early schisms, etc. In addition, there are regional surveys of early Christian history and articles dealing with Christian art and architecture, ethics and concepts like heaven, hell and immortality. The bibliographies are good and often include the writings of the early church fathers and other original works as well as secondary books and journal articles. In the front of the first volume, there is a listing of abbreviations for the journals, reference works and series cited in the bibliographies. There is also a helpful chronology. A good index is necessary for a work like this and generally the index here is helpful. But more "see also" reference might have been included. For example, in searching for information about the apostles there is no "see also" from the often interchangeable word "disciple". Obviously this is a minor quibble. On the whole, the *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* deserves consideration by both academic and public libraries for addition to their collections.

Robert Hogan has revised and expanded his *Dictionary of Irish Literature* for Greenwood Press (1996, 0-313-29172-1, \$135). Some attention is paid to Irish literature written in the Irish language. Reprinted from the first edition is **Seamus O'Neill's** article on Gaelic literature as well as a new article on contemporary Irish language literature by **Alan Titley**. However, it is Irish literature written in English on which this two-volume set concentrates. The main contents of the *Dictionary* consist of author entries and the over one thousand author entries contained in the body are of writers who primarily wrote in English. These entries contain biographical information, critical

comment and a bibliography. The bibliographies list the major works of the author and in most cases, references about their work. There are also entries for influential institutions, publications and theater groups like the **Irish Academy of Letters**, the *Journal of Irish Literature* and the **Abbey Theatre**. The set is rounded out by a chronology, a bibliography of further readings and a thorough index. Reference collections in need of books on Irish literature will want to add this to their holdings even if they have the earlier 1979 edition.

And finally, Oxford University Press has brought out the third edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* edited by **Simon Hornblower** and **Antony Spawforth** (1996, 0-19-866172-X, \$60). The second edition was published in 1970 so this work was obviously due for an update. Expanded by more than 450 pages, the third edition includes some "6250 contributions written by an international team of 364 scholars." Most of the entries from the second edition have been rewritten and approximately 840 new entries added. A look through the listing of these new entries provided at the beginning of the book indicates that broader more thematic topics have been added like class struggle, death, food supply, imperialism, kingship, etc. This goes hand in hand with the editors' stated goal of expanding the emphasis of this reference to include more than the "purely literary" aspects of Greek and Roman studies. An obvious attempt has been made to integrate the various disciplines which have influenced classical studies during the past twenty-five years. In addition, articles on previously undertreated subjects like women, the near east and its influence and ancient sexuality have been included. Overall, given the significance of the topic and the quality of the effort, most library reference collections will want to add this updated edition. 

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America that I can think of that raise their prices when faced with declining sales. Business 101 students can predict what will happen.

On a more positive note, let's talk about Marketing 103. Our consortial activity would not be possible if publishers or vendors of the products weren't willing to negotiate. Even if Skidmore by itself could afford *Current Contents*, our user demand and usage would not justify the price. When you combine the student populations and usage of the Coleslaw libraries which purchased *PsycInfo* you equal one large university library. Remain flexible when dealing with small libraries. We are not your primary market. We are not your

primary source of income. We are an additional market. We are an additional source of income. Without price concessions we are no market at all. You have nothing to lose. But both libraries and publishers can gain.

Final Thoughts

A few years ago, I said that the resource-sharing and collaboration between libraries is the silver lining in the serials crisis. I now think that along with the technological changes, the increase in serials prices is the best thing to happen to libraries in the last ten years. I am a better librarian because of the price increases and the nearly annual cancellation projects. I have become more creative, flexible, and a risk taker. The experience with price increases has made me continually evalu-

ate what libraries do and how we do things. I'm always looking for a more effective and a more economical way to get the job done. From surveys and from the doubling in our bibliographic instruction sessions, I know student and faculty library satisfaction has increased. I never thought librarianship could be so exciting and rewarding. I'm not sure when we will wrestle with the issue of who owns and controls scholarly information, but I look forward to it. In the meantime, we will continue to cooperate and collaborate with other libraries to meet our users' needs. 

NB: This paper was adapted from a presentation at the 1996 Charleston Conference Preconference on "Prioritizing Serials Acquisition."